

**Statement on the Election of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister of Israel**

*May 17, 1999*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Ehud Barak upon his election as Israel's new Prime Minister. The people of Israel have given the new Prime Minister a strong mandate.

I have just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu to thank him for his dedicated service to Israel. I also spoke with Prime Minister-elect Barak to congratulate him and reaffirm our Nation's steadfast support for Israel and its people. I will continue to work energetically for a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace that strengthens Israel's security. I look forward to working closely with Ehud Barak and his new government as they strive to reach that goal with their Palestinian and Arab partners.

**Proclamation 7196—World Trade Week, 1999**

*May 17, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

World Trade Week provides a valuable opportunity to recognize the enormous importance of exports to the United States economy and our way of life. In recent years, exports have contributed to almost one-third of our economic growth, helping to make today's economy the strongest in a generation. Unemployment is at a 30-year low, business investment is booming, and private sector growth is on the rise. Every day, an increasing number of U.S. companies and farmers realize how crucial exports are to their bottom lines. Every day, more and more American workers benefit from the fact that exporting firms pay higher salaries, experience fewer closings, and generate jobs at a faster rate than do firms that do not export. That is why we must continue to open markets and expand trade opportunities. At the same time, we must work to ensure that increased international trade benefits the world's peo-

ple, promotes the dignity of work, and protects the environment and the rights of workers.

As important as world trade is to our economy today, we are only beginning to utilize the commercial potential of the newest international marketplace: the World Wide Web. Today the Internet connects nearly 150 million people around the world. Each day 52,000 additional Americans join that number, and users are making as many as 27 million purchases on the Web each day. Forecasts predict that, in just a few years, global electronic commerce—e-commerce—will grow to more than \$300 billion annually. By 2005 Internet usage in countries around the world may account for more than \$1 trillion worth of global commerce.

Recognizing the enormous power and promise that e-commerce holds for American businesses and consumers, my Administration is working to build a framework for global electronic commerce that will keep competition free and vigorous, protect consumers, guarantee privacy, and give users—not governments—the responsibility of supervising Internet trade. Working with the Congress, industry, and State and local officials, we have enacted legislation that places a 3-year moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. We also ratified an international treaty to protect intellectual property online. Last year, representatives of 132 countries followed our lead and signed a WTO Ministerial Declaration to refrain from imposing customs duties on electronic commerce.

Working with our trading partners, industry, and consumer advocates, we are extending traditional consumer protections to the arena of electronic commerce. Without imposing burdensome regulations that might stifle growth and innovation, we have offered incentives to online companies to give consumers the protections they need to conduct business on the Internet with security and confidence. Finally, we are working to speed the completion of the global information infrastructure, a series of networks that sends messages and images at the speed of light.

Appropriately, the theme of this year's World Trade Day observance is "Trade, a Worldwide Web of Opportunity." Linking

businesses and customers around the clock, 7 days a week, the Web provides even the smallest companies with the opportunity to do business on a global scale. We are about to enter a new and unprecedented era in world trade, and America's businesses, workers, and consumers are poised to embrace this opportunity and continue our leadership of the world economy.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 16 through May 22, 1999, as World Trade Week. I invite the people of the United States to observe this week with events, trade shows, and educational programs that celebrate the benefits of international trade to our economy.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.

**Proclamation 7197—National  
Defense Transportation Day and  
National Transportation Week, 1999**  
*May 17, 1999*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

Throughout America's history, our transportation system has played a profound role in the security and development of our Nation. As early as the Revolutionary War, America's merchant marine carried cargo to help defend our national interests and uphold our democratic ideals. In the 1800's, as many Americans migrated westward, new roads and canals facilitated travel and trade, helping to unify our young country and to bolster our growing economy. And in the

20th century, few innovations have had the same far-reaching effect on our society as the airplane—now a critical part of our national defense and our robust economy.

Representing 11 percent of the U.S. economy and related to one in every seven American jobs, today's transportation industry continues to grow and thrive. Millions of Americans rely on its readiness for business and leisure travel. And we can be pleased by the improved safety of our transportation system. In 1998, the rate of traffic fatalities in America fell to its lowest level since record-keeping began in 1966. Last year also marked a milestone in aviation safety when, for the first time in our history, there were no reported passenger fatalities on scheduled U.S. air carriers.

Securing the continued strength and safety of our transportation system is among my highest priorities as President. My Administration has acted aggressively to improve the security of our rail system, and, by initiating a new program to encourage Americans to buckle their seat belts, we are working to improve the safety of vehicular travel. As we face the challenges of a new century, we must build on these achievements to ensure that our transportation system remains the finest in the world.

Last year, I was proud to sign into law the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the largest public works legislation in our Nation's history. TEA-21 invests \$198 billion in our transportation infrastructure. The Livable Communities for the 21st Century Initiative represents another integral part of our transportation strategy for the coming century, providing communities with tools and resources to ease traffic congestion, preserve green space, and pursue wise regional growth strategies. These comprehensive programs will help communities across America create a higher quality of living and secure sustainable economic growth as we work to forge more livable communities for ourselves and for the next generation of Americans.

In recognition of the ongoing contributions of our Nation's transportation system and in honor of the devoted professionals who work to sustain its tradition of excellence, the United States Congress, by joint